

Confidential

Collection No 39/38-39

Year 1938-39

CB 15-38-443

17-17

Subject

Note on Communal Activity
in India

CONFIDENTIAL.

Collection No. 39 of 38-39

Year 1938 — 1939 .

C-65. 15-38-143

✓
13 March 39

**General and Revenue
Secretariat.**

Confidential Branch.

SUBJECT

Note on Communist Activities
in ~~300~~ India.

PREVIOUS REFERENCES.

LATER REFERENCES.

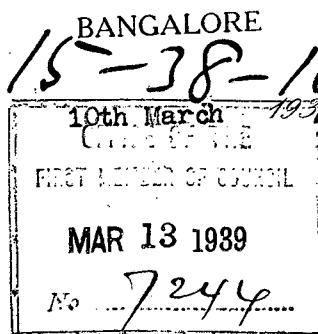
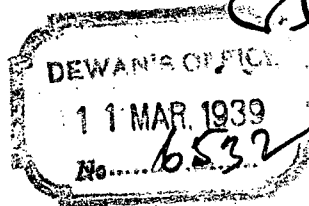
Submitted to His Highness.

I submit herewith, for the gracious perusal of His Highness,
a copy of "A note on Communist activity in India" received from the
Intelligence Bureau (Home Department) Government of India, New Delhi.

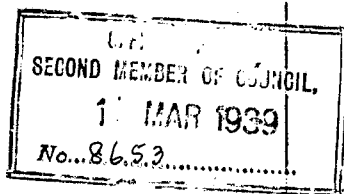
SECRET

D. O. No. *SR 282* *Exce 12/10.*
389.

F. A. HAMILTON, Esq., C.I.E.,
Inspector-General of Police
in Mysore.



Dear Mr. Kesavaiah,



I enclose herewith a copy of "A Note on Communist
Activity in India" received from the Intelligence
Bureau (Home Department) Government of India, New
Delhi, dated 22nd February 1939, for the information
of Government.

For perusal.

Dewan
1st member
2nd member

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

MS
11-3-39

To be sent to
His Highness

Rajasevaprakashta B.T. Kesavaiah, Esq., B.A.,
Chief Secretary to the Government of
His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore,
Bangalore.

D. S. N. A. W. D.

Dewan

MS
21/3

CS
MS
20/3

MS
14/3/39
17/3
20-3

Record of Cases submitted for the Orders of
His Highness the Maharaja.



Subject.

Copy of a note on Communist
activity in India.

Chief Secy.

Mo

25-3-39
no 650

Order.

KRU

23/3/39

MS
27.3.39

SUBJECT:—

*Copy of a note on Communist
activity in India*

(*)

31. All urgent or confidential files returned with His Highness' orders may in the absence of instructions or indications to the contrary, be ordinarily circulated to the Members of Council for perusal after the issue of orders.

33. The Secretaries concerned should see that orders in the cases referred to above are issued at once and that the files are returned immediately after, to the Chief Secretary for circulation to the Members.

34. In all other cases, the files will first be circulated to the Members of Council at Headquarters and then sent to the Secretariat concerned for the issue of orders.

Circulated to Members of Council for perusal of His Highness' orders ~~before/after issue of orders.~~ (Vide Rules 31, 33 and 34 of the Subsidiary Rules for the conduct of business of Council in the Manual of Council Rules and Procedure.)

M. S. A. S. J.

Chief Secretary to Government.

Through the Secretary to Government,

.....Department.

FIRST MEMBER OF COUNCIL.

27/3/39

SECOND MEMBER OF COUNCIL.

27.0

CS

A NOTE ON COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN INDIA.

15.2.39.

1. All communist plans are aimed at the capture of political power. By means of United Front tactics Indian communists hope to develop a combined workers' and peasants mass revolution, and to achieve independence from British Imperialism through armed insurrection as a preliminary to the substitution of a form of Soviet Government. Though, by reason of their previous history, certain Provinces are regarded as more fruitful grounds for development than others, the ultimate rising of the working-class is essentially an All-India plan. It forms part of each successive stage in the programme that unrest should break out in several directions simultaneously, in the belief that less advanced areas will quickly follow suit. It is also a part of this same plan, that the struggle should be conducted according to a definite plan-of-war and assume the form of a military offensive.

2. Indian communists make no secret of their belief that the new constitution offers an opportunity which doubles their chances of success. Already they have shown, in their recent and many-sided activities, their intention to take advantage of the ideals and commitments of Congress to ride to victory on the back of Congress Socialism, and, in the meantime, to advance their position by meeting each situation in a manner calculated to further the revolutionary rather than reformist tendencies.

3. The present policy of the Communist Party of India is to disarm all existing prejudices against itself as an advocate of violence and blood-shed. Every means is sought to create an atmosphere in which the Communist Party may be regarded as a legal organisation, no longer consisting of international revolutionaries but patriotic nationalists bent only on the betterment of the

working-classes of India. This is in conformity with the policy of communists in other countries - e.g. China and the U.S.A. In pursuance of this policy, Indian communists have found it expedient to declare a modified programme which, superficially, is identical with that of the National Congress - while always pressing for more militant methods. Do long as this policy is shaped by United Front tactics, it is likely that its more violent aspects and the fuller implications of the communist creed will continue to be deliberately concealed and even denied.

4. It is therefore first necessary to consider whether the plea of moderation is at all genuine or how far it is merely tactical. Have communists in India given up their idea of converting the whole country to communism, or are they still hoping to permeate the 'Popular Front' with communistic belief? The past history of the Communist Party and their voluminous Party literature affords more than sufficient proof - apart from the ample evidence available from intelligence sources - of the deliberate insincerity underlying the various communist changes of front, and also shows that behind each recent change or manoeuvre of communists and socialists there is the same urge to capture political power. But Indian Communists like their foreign masters have grown in wisdom: During recent months the C.P.I. leaders have emphasized that their first and foremost duty is to consolidate their forces so as to capture - under the plea of preserving Congress "unity" and discipline and upholding the revolutionary principles - first the Congress Socialist Party and then the whole Congress organization. The Central Committee, functioning from the Bombay headquarters - Bombay is referred to by one of them recently as the "Red Capital" experienced difficulty at first in agreeing upon the methods to be followed. One section was in favour of attacking the

working-classes of India. This is in conformity with the policy of communists in other countries - e.g. China and the U.S.A. In pursuance of this policy, Indian communists have found it expedient to declare a modified programme which, superficially, is identical with that of the National Congress - while always preserving for more militant methods. So long as this policy is checked by limited front tactics, it is likely that its more violent aspects and the fuller implications of the communist creed will continue to be deliberately concealed and even denied.

4. It is therefore first necessary to consider whether the plea of moderation is at all genuine or how far it is merely tactical. Have communists in India given up their idea of converting the whole country to communism, or are they still hoping to penetrate the 'Popular Front' with communist influence? The past history of the Communist Party and their voluminous Party literature affords more than sufficient proof - apart from the ample evidence available from intelligence sources - of the deliberate inconsistency underlying the various communist changes of front, and also shows that behind each recent change or manoeuvre of communists and socialists there is the same urge to capture political power. But Indian Communists like their foreign masters - have grown in wisdom: During recent months the C.P.I. leaders have emphasised that their first and foremost duty is to consolidate their forces so as to capture - under the plea of 'serving Congress "unity" and discipline and upholding the revolutionary principles - first the Congress Socialist Party and then the whole Congress organisation. The Central Committee, functioning from the Bombay Headquarters - Bombay is referred to by one of them recently as the "Red Capital". Experienced difficulty at first in agreeing upon the methods to be followed. One section was in favour of attacking the

existing Congress leadership, hoping thereby to win the support of the rank and file; another proposed that Congress should be converted to the communist view point, thus bringing over all Congress supporters with them. A middle course has been decided upon since September last openly supporting the left-wing of Congress, with a view to its capture through the familiar communist tactics of infiltration, while strenuously opposing any 'reactionary' tendencies on the part of the right wing: These tactics follow the (unsuccessful) attempts of British Communists to combine with the Labour Party in forming a 'popular front' for the defeat of the Chamberlain government. The Congress Socialist Party has warned its members against this communist camouflage and tightened up its own rules of membership in defence. Nevertheless the socialist groups in Andhra, Tamil Nad, Orissa etc. are in fact, nothing but C.P.I. units in disguise and considerable success can be claimed by the C.P.I. elsewhere: The measure of this success, and the present dominating influence of communists in the left wing, is shown in the Appendix.

5. The adoption of this new policy has led the communist press to modify its former attitude; criticism is now confined to the so-called reactionary right wing; communists only publicly attack Congress policy where a substantial element within the Congress itself is also opposed to the policy, and where, in consequence, the divergence serves to emphasise the sympathy of the Communist Party with other "progressive" elements. Throughout these efforts, co-ordination of all communistic activity by a central directorate is evident and reveals an organization at work, both in respect of its propaganda and the control it can exert over left-wing agitation in general, which is increasing in power and influence. Pretence of community of interest can be quoted in numerous instances to show how selected communists

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have been able to penetrate the peasant, labour and student movements. It is unnecessary to emphasise the communistic tendencies in left-wing agitation, and it is safer to regard kisan sabhas, trade unions, youth leagues and the socialist movement in general as the active followers, in some cases unknowingly but in others in less blissful ignorance, of the communist revolutionary path. The term 'communist' is to be interpreted as meaning not only actual membership of the C.P.I. which, partly owing to its illegal status, is necessarily restricted, but also its numerous sympathisers and extensive following throughout the peasant and workers' movements.

6. The policy of masking the communist connection has been shown by a variety of sources to be steadily gaining ground; recent 'secret' instructions clearly reveal that the Communist Party leaders intend to continue with tactics of penetration of the Congress left-wing on an increasing scale. Communist Party members within Provincial Congress Committees, and those working in the Congress Socialist or other 'left' groups, are to have their political activities co-ordinated by a secret committee (or bloc), which is the new term) presided over by a leader from the Central Directorate and meeting at regular intervals. Selected local leaders are to be methodically placed in the strategic political positions, and also in industry - especially the transport and utility services e.g. electric supply - so as to make their influence effectively felt at times of crisis and in the manner prescribed.

7. Recent events have shown the comparative moderation of their new tactics has enabled communists in industry and in the trade union movement generally, to appear before their fellow-workers as bona fide trade unionists, where formerly they were known as mere political agitators and trouble-makers. The policy they advocate is outwardly that of

active trade unionism, with this difference, that they are not concerned solely with the improvement of conditions in industry, but also, and indeed mainly, with the "political education of the workers". With this end in view, communist leaders invariably resist the settlement of disputes, advise strikers not to accept anything but a complete surrender of employers, and systematically exploit all grievances in order to create among the workers the 'class-hatred' mentality.

8. A move to extend communist influence is also to be found in the formation of a special department which will concentrate on "Party education". The first step in this new educational campaign is through summer-schools and volunteer-camps, disguised as kisan schools, socialist camps, etc. The syllabus of subjects to be taught consists of the theory and practice of socialism, while outwardly it is claimed their aim is merely to explain the land-revenue system to the ignorant peasantry, the reasons for their indebtedness, and generally suggest how rural economic conditions can be bettered. The real purpose however, is to aggravate rural discontent by the spread of communist beliefs, and at the same time to train a band of discontented 'leaders' who will penetrate the countryside and propagate these ideas further afield. That the organizers of these schools have already been able to claim success is shown by their plans for more ambitious schemes in Bihar, the U.P., Madras and the Punjab.

9. More proof of the penetration of the Congress Organization in seeking to capture political power, is shown in a Party circular issued last month by the 'National Front' leaders from Bombay enquiring from each Provincial centre the comparative strengths of the local communist group (as a single unit) and other left groups, the extent of Kisan Sabha independent organizations, and the details of right-wing membership. Provincial

Provincial committees have been asked at the same time to estimate the possibilities of forming a 'Left Bloc', and instructed to submit an 'Organizational report' indicating which local groups are in closest contact with the masses, the causes and nature of their success, and the influence of each group with Muslims. These and similar instructions, as well as secret meetings of leading communists and their sympathisers from each centre, are known to have been preliminaries in a general stock-taking of communist forces throughout India, in anticipation of a 'conflict' which the Right and Left wings, each in their own way, are at one in expecting.

10. In this connection, the support energetically given by communists in particular to Subhas Bose's election campaign, and Bose's declarations on the non-acceptance of Federation have had for the past six months as their objective the formation of a "left bloc" which is only now, strictly according to plan, being made public. The programme of this "Anti-Federation Left Bloc" includes an ultimatum to Government to provide a period for final preparations. The ablest and most active leaders of the Communist Party have been moving about the countryside since October popularising this scheme which was firstly tentatively announced as a "Call to Congressmen", and carefully designed to secure the support of the various non-socialists who are resentful at the slow pace of orthodox Congress policy and the dictatorial methods of the Congress High Command, whilst also covering the communists' own designs to gain control of the Congress and then afterwards to direct its full power into violent revolutionary activity. Support for the plan in the earlier and milder stages implies non-cooperation in war measures, direct support by Congress of the agitation in the States, expansion of civil liberties in British India, and extension of the volunteer movement—"the nucleus of the Peoples' Army". In its later

later stage, the plan aims at a political general strike, widespread sabotage and mass revolutionary methods. The Madras Government made public certain extracts from Communist Party pamphlets ~~circulated~~ last year. The Party's Central Executive later issued urgent confidential instructions to withdraw all copies of the pamphlet in question "on account of the damage this has already done our cause". This explains why the present plans are-so far as is possible, and in the manner of their presentment to the public cautiously worded and whatever might alarm or repel potential allies has been carefully eliminated.

11. The preceding notes present in outline the latest Communist Party preparations for an attempt to capture political power. An account of the C.P.I. Organization and its centralised Directorate, may serve to bring the picture more clearly into focus and to show how these forces work.

12. The Communist Party in India has been declared an illegal organization. Consequently its 'open' activities are restricted and necessarily disguised, any compromising 'party work' liable to come within the scope of Criminal Law Amendment Act being conducted by a secret 'inner organization'. A belief in communism, or a mere statement of revolutionary policy, is no offence. Hence prosecutions of communists are few and far between; concealment of the communist connection, and the 'underground' organization, makes it further difficult to assess the extent of communist influences at work. Actual membership figures are not stated; these would in any case be misleading. The Central Committee functions from Bombay, which is the headquarters, through the office of the 'National Front' which is the Party's 'legal' organ. Provincial and other Sub-committees exist in the Punjab, U.P., and Bengal also in Madras, Orissa, Sind and Bihar. The last three are recent developments and more or less in embryo, so that the main communist centres in India are-as they have been since the early

early twenties when communism first came to India-Bombay, Punjab U.P., Bengal and Madras. The C.P.I. is a section of the Communist International', and owes full allegiance to Moscow through the British Communist Party, which acts as Moscow's intermediary for India. The Central Committee's first duty is to obey instructions received from abroad.

13. There are more than fifty Indian Communists who have been trained in revolutionary theory and practice in Soviet Russia, secret plans to send others to gain the same experiences have very recently been under fresh discussion. In 1938 one young Indian matriculate was sent to Europe, but circumstances prevented him ever reaching Moscow and he is now back in India. Others are known to be ready, some with passports and Moscow is still anxious to train revolutionary specialists for spreading communism in India as elsewhere in colonial countries. One result of the present international situation has been stated, on good authority, to be the Comintern's decision to increase its subventions abroad, particularly in the democratic countries, i.e. Britain and France.

14. Indian Communists, who have for several years now received little financial aid from abroad, have of late once more received a certain amount of regular financial assistance from outside India. This new source of strength, although it does not compare with the early palmly days, is largely due to an Indian students' secret communist group in England, acting under the directions of British communist leaders. This group, originally formed by the late S.Saklatvalla and which supplied most of the present leaders of the communist movement, has latterly been revived with the object of promoting left-wing communism in India, through the student movement and intelligentsia. Its activities are shown to be closely related to the affairs of the India League, the ~~London~~ London Majlis and the Federation of Indian Students Societies, and certain of its members are known to have visited Paris during the recent Communist demonstrations against the French.

French Government 'to study the technique of the general strike'. From these same sources, a regular sum has been contributed towards the expenses of the "National Front" newspaper and the financing, of other communist 'legal' propaganda intended for India's conversion to communism.

15. Indigenous communist propaganda has been developed considerably in India during the past twelve months, through a network of newspapers and pamphlets in English as well as in the main Indian languages at 'popular prices'. There can be no doubt that the present increase in industrial and peasant unrest is attributable largely to the cumulative effect of this propaganda, and the freedom of press and platform in the hands of individuals whose sole purpose is to preach class-hatred and stir up strife. The most noticeable cases come from the U.P.; whilst all contain constant and more or less undisguised incitement to violence and the numerous contemptuous references clearly show the deliberate purpose of the authors is to replace the national tricolour with the Red Flag. Foreign communist propaganda is as much as ever in demand and continues to supply the main source of inspiration, but this cannot altogether be excluded in spite of the considerable seizures in every incoming foreign mail under the provisions of the Sea Customs Act. Locally printed copies of various selected Marxist and Leninist writings, from foreign editions thus obtained, are being published in considerable quantities, intended as practical hand-books of revolution. These are widely sold at cheap prices and the result is that every element of the Left is thoroughly conversant with the doctrines and practice of revolutionary communism which govern their whole outlook.

16. Examples of this type of propaganda, deriving inspiration very largely from foreign publications, are the National Front(English) Karanti(Marathi) in Bombay; Sathe(Hindi), Gansakti(Bengali),

Comrade(English) of Bengal, New Age(English), Nava Sakti(Telegu), Jana Sakti(Tamil) of Madras; Janata(Hindi) of Bihar; Krishak (Oriya) of Orissa; Azad(Sindhi) of Sind; and the Kirti Lehr (Gurumukhi, Urdu and Hindi), Lal Jhanda (Urdu and Hindi), Chingari (Urdu) Inquilab(Hindi) and Naya Hindustan(Hindi) of U.P. In addition, there are a string of 'locals' and two-anna 'pamphlet series' advocating communism, produced by such firms as the Agra Socialist Publishing Co., and complete with forewords by leading Indian communists on how best to translate theory into practice. An authority connected with the Press, and not the Police, has recently recorded the view that these are nothing but 'group organs' and that they, rather than the bigger newspapers dealing with news of such, are influencing mass opinion and deflecting it more and more to the left.

17. The Bombay 'protest strike' of November last affords an illustration of these communist forces in action. Bombay communists had been threatening a strike from the moment Congress first took office, taking every advantage of the new situation and demanding the full implementing of Congress pledges and the removal of all restraint orders in relation to civil liberties. This enabled local communists to assemble in full strength, and to instil in the workers class-hatred and a spirit of revolution - even against the Congress Government - preparatory to forcing a strike intended as the preliminary to the capture of political power from their rivals. The Textile Enquiry Committee's report, and various steps taken by the Bombay Government to redress labour's grievances took the wind out of the communists' sails and caused a change in tactics. They therefore revived the Young Workers' League and Marxist League, put forward demands including recognition of the Red Flag Union, and started propaganda to cause general unrest. In pursuance of the policy of joining all revolutionary movements and posing as champions of the oppressed, the communists also organized peasant marches and various "Days" e.g. Kisan Day, Peasants' Debt Cancellation

Day etc. etc., largely in the nature of strike drills. When these efforts were answered by the Government's Trade Disputes' Bill, aimed at maintaining industrial peace and the prevention of strikes and lock-outs, the communists immediately condemned the measure as a denial of the workers' right to strike. Coinciding exactly with the return of a local communist M.L.A. from Europe who was known to have brought advice and possibly funds - they suggested a one-day protest strike, believing that a Congress Government would be unable to take any wholehearted repressive action against them.

18. Though hitherto active only in the Provinces of India, communists have recently turned their attention also to States agitation, in proportion to the scope this offers to "professional revolutionaries". The States have always been regarded by communists as impediments in their way, and their extinction forms an important point in the C.P.I. 'Draft Platform of Action' with the dual object of bringing about the destruction of all remnants of feudalism and linking the States peoples' struggle with the larger "struggle" of the Indian masses.

Direct support in States agitation also figures prominently in the Anti-Federation Left Block programme. It is significant therefore that recent agitation in the Orissa States can be traced both from secret information and the nature of the propaganda itself, to pre-concerted communist plans exerted through local 'leaders' claiming the shelter of the Left-wing of the Congress, who have eagerly utilised certain local injustices for the promotion of mass revolution.

19. The following outline of the recent visit of PuranChand Joshi, of the communist Party's headquarters Bombay, to Bengal and Orissa reveals the methods employed to reorganise communist forces:

"Reached Calcutta 27/11/38 to study labour situation and unite the rival Communist groups. Visited mill area and coolies' Union office. Participated in 'National Front demonstration' 30-11-38. Attended Tramway Workers' meeting in Calcutta 1-12-38 ~~xxxxxxxx~~ and Bengal Kisan Conference 2-12-38. On 6-12-38 attended secret discussion to achieve a merger between Socialist and Communist groups. At a public meeting the same day emphasised concerted action by all radical elements in and outside the Congress in accordance with the 'Call to Congress' (Left Bloc). Attended two secret meetings of students on 7-12-38. On 8-12-38 at a public meeting of 1000 youths advocated the overthrow of British Imperialism through an agrarian revolution as the first step towards the establishment of a Socialist State. On 13-12-38 appealed for subscribers to the various Communist organs e.g. the National Front, New Age, Ganasakti. Under instructions from Bombay left for Cuttack 14-12-38. Proceeded to Dhenkanal 16-12-38 and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ moved in the interior as a press reporter. Returned to Calcutta on 18-12-38 and advised the despatch of 'Comrades' to participate in the Dhenkanal Agitation. Sent messages to Nabakrishna Choudhry Orissa M.L.A. offering the services of Oriya dockers agitation. Sent highly coloured articles with photograph of 'atrocities' to National Front for publication. Instructed Bengal Communists to answer a C.P.I. questionnaire (vide paragraph 9) regarding the comparative strengths of the Left and Right Wings.

Communists in India have a plan as well as a creed.

Though relatively few in numbers, they have clever and well-trained workers. Their endeavour is both to promote and foster unrest in every sphere and in every way.

APPENDIX.

OUTLINE PLAN TO SHOW THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S INFLUENCE IN THE LEFT-WING.

15-2-39.

ORGANISATION.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (C.P.I.)
(Directly under C.P.I. leadership)

OTHER SOCIALIST GROUPS
(Red signifying C.P.I. influence).

ALL INDIA CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

Orissa	Andhra	Tamil	Malabar	N.W.F.P.	U.P.	ASSAM	Bengal	Bombay	Punjab	Bihar
S.P.	C.S.P.	Nad	C.S.P.	C.S.P.	C.S.P.	C.S.P.	C.S.P.	C.S.P.	C.S.P.	C.S.P.
		C.S.P.								

ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA

engal	Punjab	Sind	U.P. Kisan	Bombay Kisan	Madras Kisan	Bihar Kisan
isan Sabha.	kisan Sabha	Haris.	Sabhas.	Sabhas.	Sabhas.	Sabha.
	committe.					

LABOUR MOVEMENT

Bombay Girni	Cawnpore	Bengal La-	Bombay	A.I.T.U.C.	N.F.T.U.	Bengal La-
Kangar (Red	Mazdur	bour Party.	T.U.C.			bour Assen..
Flag Union)	Sabha.					

STUDENTS (INTELLECTUALS) AND YOUTH MOVEMENT

Youth League.	Terrorist	Progressive	All India Students'	All India Students'
		Writers'	Federation (50%).	Federation (50%).
		Association.		

OBJECTIVE.

COMBINED WORKERS' & PEASANTS' MOVEMENT (UNDER COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP). SOCIALIST UNITY (to include STATES PEOPLES)

UNITED NATIONAL FRONT (POPULAR FRONT)

DICTATORS' IP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

Note: District Committees and the various lesser groups are omitted in the interests of clarity. Similarly in the case of M.N. Roy's followers (Royists) Royism is identical with the present C.P.I. policy).

